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ABSTRACT

The history of the home economics curriculum is traced from the late nineteenth century. The importance of the ideas of Sir Francis Bacon and Count Rumford in providing the philosophical justification for the application of science to everyday living is emphasized. The establishment of land grant colleges and women's colleges in the nineteenth century aided the development of a home economics curriculum. Since they did not have the tradition and prejudice of the older colleges in the east and admitted women on the same basis as men, this gave home economics the opportunity to develop as a field in higher education. Land grant colleges in Iowa, Kansas, and Illinois are specifically noted for their contributions to the field. Ten years of annual conferences on home economics (the Lake Placid Conferences of 1899-1908) are highlighted. The conferences focused on educating women in the application of scientific principles to homemaking. Gaining acceptance at educational institutions and seeking state and federal financial assistance were also important conference topics. The influence of the industrial revolution, war, the Depression, and the growth and research in the physical and biological sciences are discussed. Changes in home economics curriculum during the last decade appear to center around the expansion or addition of majors or areas of specialization. An increase in interdisciplinary and experimental programs during the 1970's is also noted. Future challenges to the home economics curriculum include the restructuring of programs to meet new needs, increasing research efforts, and expanding outreach programs. An 80-item bibliography is included. (SF)

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HOME ECONOMICS AS AN ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE: A SHORT HISTORY

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HOME ECONOMICS AS AN ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE: A SHORT HISTORY

by

Marie Negri Carver

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Marie Negri Carver

> *The seeds that were to produce home economics as we know it . . . were not planted in firm soil until the late nineteenth century. A few seeds were scattered much earlier but they failed to take root* (Craig, p. 3).

Home economics did not come into being suddenly. Nor was it the idea of any one person or group of persons. It represented the ideas of a variety of people who sought knowledge focusing on the basic needs of the individual and the family. Both people and events contributed to the first slow, then more rapid, evolution of home economics toward the end of the nineteenth century (Budewig, p. 250). But the fact that the idea of home economics crystallized as a self-contained entity and not an offshoot of some other movement, however, was due in large part to the efforts of Ellen H. Richards.

The Roots of Home Economics

One of the underlying principles of home economics has been traced by Budewig to the writings of Sir Francis Bacon. Bacon believed that a relationship existed between knowledge and practical activities, maintaining that neither intellectual nor material progress was possible until theory and practice came together. It was his belief that knowledge should be pursued for the purpose of helping the individual to better his or her environment and that nothing should be scorned, no matter how practical or familiar it seemed to be. Thus, Bacon cleared the way for the application of science to everyday living—food, clothing, and shelter—not only for enhancing the comfort of living but also for enlarging the intellectual life. Bacon thereby gave philosophical justification to the science of home living, clearing the way for the later and fuller development of the idea of home economics. Bacon's idea became, in the nineteenth century, one of the building blocks of home economics as an academic discipline.

In the late eighteenth century, the work of Benjamin Thompson, also known as Count Rumford, brought Bacon's idea to fruition in many concrete forms. To promote the happiness of mankind through the improvement of the conditions

of the individual's material existence was for Rumford, as it had been for Bacon, a great aim of life. Also like Bacon, Rumford sought to bring about what he called a "cordial embrace" between the science and art and to direct their united efforts to the increase of domestic comfort and well-being (Budewig, p. 5). Rumford's application of this idea to the household, developing what he termed *domestic economy*, established a firm foundation for what later developed as home economics.

> *By applying science to the affairs of the household, Rumford envisioned a degree of home living more beautiful, more healthful and more comfortable than ever before . . . a better type of home living for all . . . [individuals] regardless of their station in life. Therefore economy was the idea which dominated Rumford's work . . . [and] because the household was his laboratory, he called his philosophy "domestic economy"* (Hoeflin, p. 190).

It was Rumford's interests that led him to his most practical pursuits of domestic economy: experimenting and researching on the efficiency of kitchen ranges, the construction of kitchen fireplaces, the invention of improved kitchen utensils, the preparation of foods, the economy of fuel, the heating and lighting of houses, the warmth of clothing, and the general improvement of the kitchen (Hoeflin, p. 183; Budewig, p. 135). Rumford's work in the interest of domestic economy was so wide and so meticulously executed that from his day on there was little doubt as to the importance of domestic economy.

> *One of Rumford's theories which he put into practice in his work . . . was that the food, clothing and household of people had a definite and direct relationship to their happiness and indirectly with their virtues* (Budewig, p. 135).

The idea of the real and the ideal being one was emphasized by Bacon, but Rumford took hold of it and give it substance through scientific experimentation.

> *. . . . through the work of Rumford, home economics came to have a philosophy, a method and the beginnings of a body of knowledge all its own. From this time forward the story of home economics is that of a gathering of forces which has become known as the Home Economics Movement* (Budewig, p. 159).

The Home Economics Movement

> *The home economics movement was part of the larger democratic and humanitarian movement which had gradually evolved out of the great Christian tradition. Coupled with the spirit of inquiry inherited from the Greeks, the cultural milieu was formed in which science in both its theoretical and practical aspects could develop. The home economics movement was the result of interest in the application of the principles of science to the details of the home environment* (Budewig, p. 204).

Following the work of Rumford a definite movement to educate people for home and family living became recognizable. Influential persons such as Catherine Beecher, Edward L. Youmans, and Justus Von Liebig, as well as the Land Grant Act of 1862, helped to lay the groundwork for the first Lake Placid Conference on Home Economics in 1899. As individuals engaged in this field of thought and action gathered together for mutual assistance and encouragement, they launched what became known as the Home Economics Movement.

From 1841, with the publication of Catherine Beecher's book on *domestic economy*, to the end of the nineteenth century, the growth of home economics was phenomenal. The many events, forces, and ideas that converged to make its development possible included: the interests in science, the advances in agriculture, the movement toward the higher education for women, and the Land Grant Act of 1862. All of these gave impetus to the general interest in the application of science to the home environment for the purpose of bettering the living of all people. Educational programs growing out of this mode of thinking have had a variety of names at different times and places but a consensus developed that these programs should fall under one all-encompassing term: *home economics*.

During the early 1800's, a structural innovation that arose consisted of new unitary institutions offering practical education in other occupations than the ancient professions. The most influential of these institutions was Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute of Troy, New York, which began instruction in 1826. This institution was organized and financed primarily to "qualify teachers . . . in the application of experimental chemistry, philosophy, and natural history to agriculture, domestic economy, the arts, and manufactures" (Cowley, p. 224).

The other great unitary school of science and engineering which opened in 1861 was Massachusetts Institute of Technology. During the years between the founding of these two institutions, a second type of practical college appeared: the agricultural school (Cowley, p. 224).

While men like Van Rensselaer and Greeley strove to create new unitary structures for practical education, others began the reconstruction of the "Old American Literary Colleges" (Cowley, p. 223). Two of the most important of the educators were Eliphalet Nott and Francis Wayland. Nott, Wayland, and others worked to add new and utilitarian content to the classical and literary curriculum of the "Old American Literary Colleges." With partial success they strove not to build new structures but to widen the functions of the existing structures (Cowley, p. 225). Thus a wide and deep breach developed in American higher education between the upholders of "liberal education," the curriculum of classical language and mathematics, and the promoters of what came to be known as the "New Education," the education which included the modern languages, natural sciences, social sciences, imaginative arts, and practical studies (Cowley, p. 231).

The American college, as maintained by the authors of the Yale Report, should be kept undefiled by vocationalism.

> *American colleges and universities should concern themselves only with the . . . education of "men of learning," and other structures should be established to provide . . . [practical] training. By thus thrusting aside the new technological knowledge, the "Old American Literary Colleges" stimulated the creation of . . . [the unitary structures]. At the same time they prepared the way for the Land Grant College Act . . .* (Cowley, p. 231).

The early history of home economics paralleled closely the development of the education of women. Since the necessary knowledge of household processes and mothercraft could be acquired through a combination of informal home teaching and experiences, the formal education for women was rudimentary, if not nonexistent, until the 1830's. In the United States women outnumbered men except in the frontier country, and thus a

> *"glorious phalanx of old maids" and what Hawthorne called "that damned mob of scribbling women" set about the business of getting equal rights for their sex politically, legally, and educationally* (Cowley, p. 240).

With the changes in the industrial and the social lifestyles of Americans that occurred during the mid-1800's, the sphere of women's activities and responsibilities was greatly enlarged. Thus many questions were raised concerning their education and training.

> *Even before colleges became interested in the problem of the home, limited aspects of the subject . . . [of home economics] under*

> *different names, were introduced in certain private and public schools and in out of school programs, such as the Farmer's Institute and settlement house projects. These programs which were focused on the home and family, although representing the traditional . . . [and] intellectual disciplines, recognized the value of applying science, economics, and art to everyday living* (Zuill, 1959, p. 519).

In 1833 Oberlin College initiated coeducation and the "elevation of the female character" by admitting thirty-eight women as members of the first class which had an enrollment of 101 students. The following year a "Young Ladies College" opened its doors in Kentucky to the merry scoffing of *The New York Transcript* which suggested that

> *the degrees be "Mistress of Pudding Making" and "Mistress of the Scrubbing Brush" and . . . the honorary degrees be R.W. Respectable Wife and M.W.R.F. Mother of a Well Regulated Family* (Cowley, p. 240).

When Mary Lyons opened the Mount Holyoke Female Seminary in 1836 the jibes continued. The newspapers labeled the seminary "Miss Lyon's Rib Factory" (Cowley, p. 240).

With the continuing struggle of women for recognition of their intellectual equality and their rights to equal educational opportunity, liberal arts colleges for women opened their doors to provide women with an education intellectually equal to that which was being provided for men.

> *The first colleges opened to women were organized to provide educational opportunities equivalent to those of men, but the nature of women's education became a matter of great concern* (Zuill, 1959, p. 519).

Along with the classical curriculum, theoretical instruction in domestic economy was offered. This instruction was provided through textbooks and lectures, plus some hours for sewing, care of clothing, and care of the home (Lee and Drexel, p. 22). This instruction lasted only a few years, and not until the 1890's, following the introduction of domestic economy into the land-grant colleges, did the liberal arts colleges for women add it to their curricula again (McGrath and Johnson, p. 9; Lee and Drexel, p. 22).

The Home Economics Movement gained momentum during the last half of the nineteenth century. Through the years the philosophy of home economics changed with the times and with the needs of the people from the early courses

in cooking and sewing to the emphasis upon professional training for the betterment of human welfare and the improvement of the home and family living, as illustrated in Table 1. As early as 1890, Ellen H. Richards discussed the need for women in higher education to train in "home economics": "We have been told of our mental ability . . . but the kind of influence we should have on the source of political economy the kitchen has been ignored" (Richards, 1890, p. 11).

The kitchen was no longer seen as a mundane place where a woman performed her drudgery; rather, it was seen as the bedrock of the nation's economy. Ellen H. Richards was concerned with the seeking of ways to improve the human conditions through the betterment of living conditions.

> . . . *[Ellen H. Richards' idea] was indeed an ambitious one, for it embraced education for the public "to reform home environment," to arouse parents "to the waste of life and possible savings," to the need of child study and care, . . . and to the better budgeting "of income and expenditure . . . "* (Talbot and Matthews, p. 177).

At the same time that the land-grant colleges were being established, agitation for the higher education of women was also gaining momentum. The land-grant colleges, being without tradition and consequently without the prejudice of the older colleges in the East, admitted women on the same basis as men. Home economics was thereby given the opportunity to develop as a field in the higher education of women.

> . . . *no agency has been more effective . . . [in contributing to the development of home economics] than the land-grant colleges. No other agency has appreciated the possibilities of the subject so clearly or laid for it such broad and deep foundations. As these colleges were among the first to recognize the need for a scientific basis in the education for the home, they have been most insistent that this standard should be maintained, and the home economics . . . [units] have realized the necessity of maintaining college ideals in . . . [their] work if they would have the respect of the college community* (Bevier, 1928, pp. 131-132).

With the admission of women into the land-grant colleges, courses to meet their special needs and interests began to develop, and the idea of the application of science to the affairs of the household received fair chances of development. Academic work in this field was first introduced into the land-grant colleges of Iowa, Kansas, and Illinois. Eddy noted this development when he stated:

Table 1. The Changing Concept of the Purpose of Home Economics[a]

Pre-Beginnings (1796–1862)	Skills and Techniques (1862–)	Extension of Family Welfare, Economic, Social, and Political (1900–)	Assisting Personal Development Goals (1930–)	New Directions (1955–1965)	Changing Mission of Home Economics (1965–1975)
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

[a] [illegible]

The first record of a course in this . . . field . . . [of academic study] comes from Iowa State College. . . . By 1872, the Iowa "Ladies' Course" listed "Domestic Economy" as a subject offered for women students. The wife of the first president delivered lectures on cooking . . . prior to 1875. In that year she convinced the trustees to establish a department of "cookery and household arts." This led to the development of an experimental kitchen, the first of its kind in any college. Kansas Agricultural College began its "Domestic Economy" curriculum in 1873 with lessons in sewing and instruction on the application of chemistry to foods. Illinois Industrial University, in 1874, developed a systematic and thorough program under the name, "The School of Domestic Sciences and Arts" (Bubb, p. 62).

The purpose of the field of domestic economy or domestic sciences and arts was "to give earnest and capable women a liberal and practical education . . . making them the equals of men and enabling them to bring science and culture to the all-important labors and vocations of womanhood" (Bevier, 1919, p. 31).

Home economics grew rapidly and the landgrant colleges thereby developed strong programs in home economics. Developments prior to the 1900's sought to meet the demands for more practical education for living and, in many ways the science aspects were weak. Later the tendency was to minimize the "practical" aspect of home economics and to make instruction more "theoretical" in order to gain the respect for home economics that was received by the sciences (Bate, p. 168). Even though professional education had its beginnings in this era, the emphasis of home economics was on the enrichment of the general curriculum rather than professional preparation.

From these early beginnings, additional courses in this area of study were developed in the landgrant colleges. As new landgrant colleges were developed, these courses became a fundamental part of their curricula. These courses slowly infused into other institutions of higher education.

As early as 1890, Ellen H. Richards advocated the study of domestic economy in all colleges for women. The college must, she thought, maintain the dignity of the woman's home sphere. Richards kept the larger picture in mind as well when she said that domestic economy would

> *...broaden the ideas of life with which the young women leave college, ... [and] bring her in touch with the great problems which press more closely each year ... [as well as] secure a solid basis for improvement* ... (Richards, 1890, p. 9).

Ellen H. Richards did not always hold such a strong position with respect to specialization. However, her ideas were indicative of changing thoughts on the subject. A few women involved in higher education remained advocates of the pure liberal arts curricula for women students believing that specialized education for women, anything from sanitary science to domestic science to child study, was [illegible] for the whole concept of women's higher education (Frankfort, p. 89).

During the same period when the higher education curriculum in domestic economy was established, another form of adult education was being developed. Cooking instruction was started in 1876 as part of the program of the Free Training School for Women in New York City. From this, the New York Cooking School was developed. The Boston Cooking School, organized in 1879 by the Women's Educational Association of Boston, also provided lectures on cookery and the process of digestion. After being established as the first incorporated cooking school in America, the Boston Cooking School was taken over by Simmons College in 1902 (Ibid, p. 29).

Many changes were taking place in the United States during the decade that closed the nineteenth century and opened the twentieth century. Industrialization, immigration, and urbanization were descending in full force upon American society which produced changes that affected the economic function of the home. It was outside of the institutional educational setting that real alternatives for women were either articulated most vehemently or acted out (Frankfort, p. 110). The late nineteenth and early twentieth century was a period in which women sought to win political equality. Advocates of women's rights revolted against the restrictions that were commonly placed upon women in education, professions, and politics. Increased amounts of leisure time also stimulated interests in the development of women's clubs (Hall, p. 31). All over the country people had been working individually and in groups for the betterment of home living, but at this time there existed no uniformity in the nomenclature or content of courses offered in this area at different institutions. What was evident to Melvil Dewey was the need for someone to coordinate these fragmented efforts in a combined force. Thus the ten Lake Placid Conferences on Home Economics (1899-1908) were organized through the efforts of Ellen H. Richards, who had been inspired by Melvil Dewey, who had "overpersuaded" her to crystallize her convictions (Lake Placid Conferences on Home Economics 1908, p. 34).

The Ten Lake Placid Conferences (1899-1908)

In the final year of the nineteenth century and early years of the twentieth century, a decade of study gave the emerging discipline of home economics a secure name and identity and, in the view of most contemporary home economists, provided its foundation. This most important decade in the history of the field of home economics was known as the Lake Placid Conferences. No other single experience had as much influence in charting the course of home economics. One primary objective of the conferences was to enlarge the scope of home economics beyond domestic science, which had been primarily limited to cooking and sewing.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the home economics movement was in what Budewig termed "a state of supersaturated solution needing only the point of a needle to start crystallization" (Budwig, p. 8). This crystallization was provided when two persons, Ellen H. Richards and Melvil Dewey, planned the first Lake Placid Conference on Home Economics in 1899. The following accounts highlight the Lake Placid Conferences, especially those having a direct bearing on the later developments of home economics.

The First Conference (1899)

Those persons most interested in home sciences or household economics were convinced that "the time was ripe for some initial action" (Van Horn, p. 377). This conviction was further emphasized when Melvil Dewey reported that the growing feeling among the people was that there was no question more important than home science and that those persons who could make the home all it should be would get nearer the foundation of life than teachers, ministers, and editors (Lake Placid Conferences on Home Economics 1899, p. 4). Thus, in 1899, eleven persons came together to form the first Lake Placid Conference.

The first order of business during the first conference was the selection of a name that would reflect the full theme of the field. "After full discussion, the name 'Home Economics' was agreed on as the title preferable for the whole general subject. . . ." (Lake Placid Conferences on Home Economics 1899, p. 4). Even though the name *Home Economics* was agreed upon, the issue of name selection persisted throughout the ten conferences. Other alternatives—domestic economy, domestic science, and euthenics—were discussed and voted on, but in the end the organization was officially christened *home economics.* The choice of home economics showed the direction of the participants' thinking. There was no stumbling upon a name. There was much thinking and discussion about what the home should do for the individual and society. Thus having been named, home economics was classified as a field of knowledge. The name of the field and the rationale for it is still one of the persistent contemporary issues. Other topics discussed at this conference included the preparation of women for leadership roles, the classification of literature bearing on home economics, and the standard of living of the American family.

The Second Conference (1900)

Melvil Dewey spoke of the increasing interest in the affairs pertaining to home life and the effort to make it more nearly ideal. He also saw home economics in a sociological context and emphasized that ". . . home economics was coming to the front as a part of sociology" (Lake Placid Conferences on Home Economics 1900, p. 13). However, home economics was to develop as an independent subject, with sociology an important foundation along with other natural and social sciences.

The question of the material (or useful) and the liberal (or educational) qualities of home economics also came into being.

> *The whole question of putting home economics into the schools is only one of the problems of the broader movement known as "new*

education." In the last hundred years we have discovered and applied certain scientific truths that have effected the most profound changes in our environment. The whole civilized world is feeling the need of new training to meet these new conditions . . . as we all know, it is an attempt to adjust our present educational system to meet the changed conditions of life. . .[of the times] (Goodrich, pp. 26-27).

Home and social economics have so vital a connection with every branch of education that, in a way, we must carry the whole burden at once, tho we feel like Atlas with a world on our backs. . . . We should also seize upon whatever outposts that can be taken with the greatest economy of effort. To inform public opinion, to rouse public interest in each and every branch of home economics, to effect a closer correlation . . . with sciences already established, to emphasize the necessity for a strong scientific foundation for any liberal interpretation of the phenomena of life –all this will act as leaven and from its fermentation will come at last public recognition and acceptance of home economics as a science and a necessity (Goodrich, pp. 39-40).

The way is long, but the end is not uncertain. The broad development and application of home economics is in the direct line of progress, and this being so, its final success is already assured for the laws of progress "are of one web with the laws of morals" and life (Goodrich, p. 40).

The Third Conference (1901)

Hunt in her paper on "Revaluations" called for the individual to be viewed as rational and in control of the environment and its relationship to his or her values.

The world within, or the inner life, which in every individual is calling for expression, is largely determined by natural endowment and is beyond his control. His values to the world depends upon the greatness of his inner life and his. . . ability to reveal that life. His own happiness, on the other hand, depends upon his ability to give outward expression to the life received, be that great life or little life (Hunt, 1901, p. 70).

"Good" values make the individual's freedom ". . . approach its maximum" (Hunt, 1901, p. 81). Caroline Hunt's philosophy of home economics stressed that

The individual's value to the world depends upon the greatness of his inner life and his ability to express it . . . [with] the three essential traits to full expression being: health, efficiency and opportunity (Hunt, 1901, pp. 79, 81).

Only when our clothing, our homes, and our furniture are planned with direct reference to the needs, the comfort and the efficiency of the human body considered as the instrument for the expression of the inner life shall we be fully freed thru our mastery of our tools. . . . The ability of the individual to put correct values upon concealments, tools and expressions of beauty, in light of his individual need of his relation to his knowledge (Hunt, 1901, pp. 86-87).

The Fourth Conference (1902)

In the opening address of the fourth conference, Ellen H. Richards stated:

. . . do not be disappointed if we are not able to find the remedy for domestic troubles, if we are not able to give the world a panacea for social ills. The task is too great. We can only promise to bring to this discussion the open mind and earnest spirit of the student . . . (Lake Placid Conferences on Home Economics 1902, p. 8).

Another basic issue discussed was that of redefining the central focus of home economics. In pushing forward a campaign for education in the interests of home and family, there were certain difficulties to be met and certain forces to be reckoned with. Among these difficulties was the difference in the meaning given to the term *home economics.* Thus specific references to the focus of the field were discussed during this conference. Home economics was seen as " . . . a study of connections and relations between phases of . . . [the individual's] nature" (Lake Placid Conferences on Home Economics 1902, p. 71). In a more comprehensive form, home economics was defined as

. . . a study of the laws, conditions, principles, and ideas which are concerned on the one hand with . . . [the individual's] immediate physical environment and on the other hand with his nature as a social being, and is the study specially of the relation between those factors (Lake Placid Conferences on Home Economics 1902, pp. 70-71).

In forming a complete definition, however, it may be possible to consider home economics as a philosphical subject: a study of

> ***relations,*** *while the subjects on which it depends, . . . economics, sociology, chemistry, hygiene, and others are empirical in their nature and concerned with events and phenomena* (Lake Placid Conferences on Home Economics 1902, p. 71).

In the definition lies the clue to the misunderstanding which arose from the beginning and has continued to the present concerning the nature and the purpose of home economics as well as the means by which it should be implemented. Home economics is very complex, encompassing both the material and the nonmaterial aspects of life. The real significance of home economics lies in relational aspects between the material and the nonmaterial, as stated by the early founders of home economics—relating the physical and the value aspects of life. To this day, this fact has caused misunderstanding and confusion within the field as well as by the image projected by home economics.

> *. . . [but] the ability . . . [of home economics] to contribute to the social and cultural environment of the family as well as to its physical surroundings has, over the years, become one of the most treasured characteristics of home economics* (Brucher, p. 10).

The participants of this conference pointed out that the time had come when subjects related to the home and its interests should have greater recognition in the curriculum of institutions of higher education.

> *Almost every school and college . . . pretends to have departments of economics and philosophy as well as natural sciences. What is possible in such schools, even, is something to connect and bind together into a consistent whole the pieces of knowledge at the present . . . [that are] unrelated. Such a binding together is what is meant by home economics* (Lake Placid Conferences on Home Economics 1902, p. 71).

It was recognized that there was a strong and steadily increasing demand for knowledge in home economics and believed that its educational possibilities were not inferior to those of other subjects in the curriculum of institutions of higher education. It was also believed that instruction in this area promoted individual and social efficiency. The participants, therefore, felt that an extension of such work where it was already established and its introduction into other institutions of higher education would contribute to the solution of some of the most vexing social problems of the times.

The Fifth Conference (1903)

This meeting stressed the relation of the individual and his or her environment which was used by the early leaders in the home economics movement as a frame of reference. Arnold wrote on the training and certification of teachers stressing the view of home economics in relation to other subjects, stating that " . . . the sciences, literature, history, and human life" are the foundations of a household economics teacher " . . . which will enable her to recognize these relations . . . the relation of science to the everyday household arts and to lead the way to a better and saner practice." Arnold's statement concerned the relationship of theory to practice and that of science to art. She saw that no part was complete unto itself and that the goal was to " . . . yield a necessary part of the perfect whole" (Arnold, pp. 11-12) and that the parts are interdependent with each interpreting the other.

Abel amplified the relation between home economics material and humanistic values: "We have still to define for the many just what is meant by home economics . . . [that] we are not disembodied spirits, . . . [that] we can only express ourselves thru our environment, and this material environment in turn reacts on us and affects mental and moral growth" (Abel, p. 29).

Richards' writings and discussions also reflected an understanding and concern for the effect of environment on the development of the individual.

> *There can be no question of the place in a liberal curriculum of a study of . . . [the individual] in relation to his environment. It was once held that . . . [the individual] was independent of, or even that he controlled his environment, but as natural forces are better understood, the position of . . . [the individual] is seen to recede from the dominant one to a less effective factor. It must be assumed . . . that a study of material things which react on . . . [the individual's] intellectual and moral nature is a legitimate and, indeed, an essential part of his education. . . . The moment it is acknowledged that . . . [the individual] "reacts" to his environment, the study of these reactions is not only allowable but imperative* (Richards, 1903, p. 65).

The Sixth Conference (1904)

One of the most significant and often quoted pieces of this conference is the Ellen H. Richards' creed:

Home Economics stands for:

The ideal home life for today unhampered by the traditions of the past.

The utilization of all the resources of modern science to improve the home life.

The freedom of the home from the dominance of things and their due subordinance to ideals.

The simplicity in material surroundings which will most free the spirit for the more important and permanent interests of the home and of society (Lake Placid Conferences on Home Economics 1904, p. 31).

Ellen H. Richards' great gift was her belief that doing work well for its own sake is important, if, of course, that work has an important purpose (Bricker, p. 386). She laid the solid foundation of science for home economics even as she looked to the future of all sciences. She was ahead of her time, but as she told the participants at this conference,

> *It is our duty to see ahead of our time, beneath the surface, to read more in the signs and so prepare. In our numbers and varied interests there is safety from hasty conclusions. To this work, we welcome all and hope for help from all* (Richards, *1904, p. 8).*

The question was whether home economics represented a curriculum of educational value required in institutions of higher education. Hunt spoke to this concern in the "Report of the Standing Committee on Home Economics in Higher Education":

> *The question whether home economics is worthy of being presented as a separate course . . . depends upon whether it offers a field uncovered by other subjects and upon whether that field is worthy to receive the advantages which accrue to specialization. . . . The subject matter of home economics can be presented by . . . chemistry, physics, bacteriology, economics, sociology, and art; but . . . there is a special field—that of the use of social resources by the family group—which cannot be satisfactorily presented even by the combined efforts of the . . . [other areas]. This field is sufficiently . . . important to be investigated separately and to profit by the opportunity for . . . self-determined alliances with other . . . [areas]* (Hunt, 1904, p. 38).

It is our duty to see ahead of our time, beneath the surface, to read more in the signs and so prepare. In our numbers and varied interests there is safety from hasty conclusions. To this work, we welcome all and hope for help from all (Richards, 1904, p. 8)

The issue of the name appeared once more. It was believed by the participants that, if the name *home economics* was satisfactory to everyone, the issue of the name of the discipline would not come up every year. The name *household administration* was suggested. Then Ellen H. Richards suggested the name of *euthenics*—the science that deals with the development of human well-being by the improvement of living conditions. Her rationale was that *euthenics* connoted a science of controllable environment. Her presentation was so convincing that the conference persons voted to accept the name to represent the work in institutions of higher education. The following nomenclature was adopted at the national level during 1904:

***Handwork** in elementary schools.*
***Domestic Science** in secondary schools.*
***Home Economics** in normal and professional schools.*
***Euthenics** in institutions of higher education.*
(Lake Placid Conferences on Home Economics, 1904, p. 64).

The Seventh Conference (1905)

The subject matter of home economics as it was to be implemented in the elementary and secondary schools and in institutions of higher education dominated the last four conferences. Subject matter was the key link in the development of the foundation of home economics and the root of the duality between its focus and practice that was still a part of the field.

All the broad understanding that has been given to home economics in previous conferences seems to be forgotten in the efforts to get acceptance as a manual training subject in the elementary and secondary schools . . . [Thus] it is not surprising . . . that home economics soon became stereotyped as "cooking and sewing" to justify it as . . . [hard work and thereby] a part of the manual training movement (Budewig, p. 277).

The Eighth Conference (1906)

The main concern of this conference was to differentiate between home economics at the elementary, secondary, and higher education levels, as well as

the curriculum that should be included in the trade school. In terms of the focus of home economics, Richards remarked as follows:

> *. . . [there is a need to] accept the one really important idea of organic evolution so far as . . . [the individual] is concerned, namely, that of modification by the environmennt. . . . Power must be had today. Culture may well be added.*
>
> *But power must be underneath whatever is to survive. . . . Euthenics or its equivalent must be a part of the educational equipment of all live institutions* (Richards, 1906, pp. 33, 35).

The Ninth Conference (1907)

This conference explicitly spelled out one of the implicit concerns of the meetings: awareness of the psychological and qualitative concerns of home economics. Andrews noted the humanistic as well as the technical factors present in home economics and called attention to this matter in a presentation entitled "Psychic Factors in Home Economics":

> *Enlargement of . . . [home economics] must come in the future . . . including . . . the psychic in our science of the home. So far science has concerned itself chiefly with material factors . . . I wish to point out . . . the great extent of mental in the family life . . . [and] every province of the material as conquered by the individual, becomes a vehicle for the spiritual. Still . . . [it] must be remembered that there is a science of the personal and the spiritual for itself, and when psychology, ethics, sociology, and other sciences of the personal are directly applied to the home, then home science will have entered into new regions of influence. Then, immediate attention will be had to what we value, as among things of highest human worth, the fine art of family living* (Andrews, pp. 152-153).

The Tenth Conference (1908)

The tenth and final conference dealt with the training of teachers for home economics. Josephine Berry, in keeping with the identification of the threads of the focus of home economics, remarked that ". . . the aim of the . . . work . . . [of home economics] is the bettering of conditions of the people" (Lake Placid Conferences on Home Economics 1908, p. 60).

Regardless of the words used, Ellen H. Richards and the other early leaders in home economics recognized that there was both a "spirit" and a "law" in the subject matter and that the "spirit" was often lost sight of when adhering to the "law." Home economics was believed to be taught either as a technique or as a vital subject with great human value. Richards stressed this in her meaning of home economics:

> *Each contact of mind with mind flashs [sic] out a spark of light, sounded a note of this varied subject and thus home economics was decided on as ethical rather than merely one of the useful arts . . . [and] a fuller acknowledgement of economical and ethical was made in the name adopted by the Lake Placid Conference [participants] . . . after much thought and full discussion . . . Home Economics: **home** meaning the place of shelter and nurture of children and for those personal qualities of self sacrifice for others for the gaining of strength to meet the world, **economics** meaning the management of this home on economic lines as to time and energy as well as to mere money* (Richards, 1908, pp. 20-21).

It was noted during the discussions at the tenth conference that the training of professional home economists and the homemaker were not compatible. How to balance the professional and liberal and the practical and theoretical experience at the same time and relating them to tangible values of life is still a question before the field (Marshall, p. 8). Although there had been general agreement concerning philosophical questions, the many-sided nature of home economics presented difficulties from the beginning—it being hard to envision both the practical and value aspects of home economics at the same time.

Each year interest in the Lake Placid Conference on Home Economics had grown and included an ever-widening set of problems of interest to the leaders of home economics. Ellen H. Richards summarized the progress and development of the conferences and the movement at the tenth annual conference when she stated:

> *Ten years ago one of the crying needs of the country . . . was the appreciation of what science might do for the housewife . . . in making her work both easier and more efficient. The obstacle . . . [to satisfying these needs] seemed to be the woman herself . . .* (Richards, 1908, p. 20).
>
> *The present aim of the Lake Placid conference is to teach the American people . . . the management of their homes on economic lines as to time and energy. Once the essentials of home life are settled, they must . . . become . . . a habit of life . . . [so that] no*

occasion will find the members of the family unprepared. . . . The ten years have seen the establishment of . . . the beginnings of fundamental education along progressiv [sic] lines (Richards, 1908, p. 25).

Summary of the Ten Lake Placid Conferences

The Lake Placid Conferences were the result of the faith of one woman in her sex: that if attention were called to the gaps in knowledge needing to be filled, women would be quick to take the steps towards the desired end. Progressiv [sic] human life has always been shown in the asking and answering of questions. The ancient astronomers and philosophers askt [sic] of the heavens and of their own consciousness why and whence and the world has been trying for 2000 years to answer (Richards, 1908, p. 19).

The Lake Placid Conferences on Home Economics met for ten consecutive years from 1899 to 1908. These meetings represented the forming of the foundation of the focus of home economics.

The Lake Placid Conference participants brought to home economics the impetus of reflection and the strength of organization. . . . Stone-ceyes were broken and provisions were made for new plans, new adventures, new growth . . . (Justin, p. 714).

The Lake Placid Conference participants envisioned in the development of education for women the application of scientific principles in homemaking. The contribution of the natural sciences, social sciences, arts, and humanities were all recognized as important in the training of home economists, but the natural sciences were seen to have a more "important value" (Strong, p. 461). The first five years were concerned with the focus of home economics in regard to the purpose, definition, scope, and the relation of the new subject to existing curriculum in educational institutions. These ideas appeared to have the unanimous support of all the participants.

The last five years were spent with the task of formulating a body of knowledge, gaining acceptance in educational institutions, and seeking state and federal financial assistance for the implementation of the idea. The practical aspect of the development of the field suffered from a gap between the "ideal" and the "concrete" - either the ideal or the practical values were emphasized to the detriment of personal and family living. This confusion was further complicated because at that time there was little exact knowledge to support the big organizing conceptual idea (Vaines, p. 31). It is important to note this as a

crucial issue for home economics today since it is more complex as well as unanswered. Seeking agreement has met with confusion because the end goals and values have not been clarified (Brown, 1967, p. 775).

One of the major accomplishments of the conferences was the establishment of the plans for a national home economics organization: The American Home Economics Association. On January 1, 1909, the American Home Economics Association was made official and the members of this association stated their purpose as "the improvement of life conditions in the home, the institutional household and the community . . . welcoming to its membership all who are actively interested in home problems" ("Announcement," p. 1).

The proceedings of the Lake Placid Conferences thus indicated two areas of need: the social need to incorporate, at all educational levels, organized areas of study which would contribute to and improve the quality of the life of the individuals and families in society; and the necessity of differentiation by name among the different educational levels (Vaines, p. 32).

Home Economics Following the Lake Placid Conferences (1910-1978)

> *The twentieth century is a fearfully complex time in which to live. We do not believe that it could be possible or even desirable to hand out neat answers to all the problems . . . . [Thus we are taught] to think, in the confidence that a trained mind will be able to handle the process of living as it unfolds* (White, p. 87).

During the first decade of the twentieth century, home economics evolved in response to the social and economic conditions created by the industrial revolution. The visions of the early leaders had guided and influenced the development of home economics during this period; however, the concept of the meaning of home economics had expanded under the influence of significant social and economic factors that affected the home and family life (Hall, p. 50).

The Decade 1910-1919

As this decade began, there was an effort to pursue the family-centered ideals of the Lake Placid Conference participants. It was stressed in 1911 that

> *. . . students taking degree programs in home economics should be required to take other groups of subjects having more of less direct relationship to the life of men, women, and children in the home*

and to the community such courses as mathematics, language, science, economics, sociology . . . as well as make their . . . [program] a well-rounded scheme of liberal education . . . and at the same time contribute to the thoroughness of their work in home economics (Committee on Instruction in Agriculture of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations, pp. 25-26).

The same committee recommended required courses in home architecture, sanitation, home decoration, textiles, food selection and preparation, and household management as part of the standard undergraduate program in home economics. This proposal, though not its intent, opened the way for a proliferation of courses emphasizing skills and techniques.

In 1912, the term *home economics* became the official name of all programs in domestic science and arts, home sciences, and household arts and sciences (Lee and Dressel, p. 27), although some individuals remained unconvinced that this name was an all-encompassing term. Many individuals involved in the field still classified home economics as one of the many complexes contributing to the more comprehensive complex of hygiene.

Committees of the American Home Economics Association thus began diligently during 1912 to get the subject matter into pedagogical form so that it might take its proper place in the curricula of institutions of higher education. The findings of these committees were embodied in *The Syllabus of Home Economics* which stressed "family" application as a criterion for determining the boundaries of home economics content.

> *Home economics, as a distinctive subject of instruction, is the study of economic, sanitary, and aesthetic aspects of food, clothing, and shelter as connected with their selection, preparation and use by the family in the home and by other groups of people . . . Home economics, like many other subjects of instruction, . . . is complex. In it, the contributing subjects . . . [such as] art, history, welfare, sociology, aesthetics, economics, physiology, hygiene, mathematics, chemistry, physics, and biology . . . [are grouped around the ideas of food, clothing, and shelter] . . . [and] courses of instruction in home economics may be cultural, technical, or vocational.*
>
> *[It was thus] . . . proposed that the subject matter of home economics be divided into four main divisions: food, clothing, shelter, and household and institutional management* (American Home Economics Association, 1913, pp. 6-7).

From 1862 to 1907 steady growth and development of subject matter within home economics occurred. Gradually the public began to realize that home economics meant not only the selection and preparation of food and clothing but also the improvement of the home (Bevier, 1928, p. 169). The home economics curricula continued to be evaluated and increasing emphasis was placed on child development, personal and family relationships, consumer education, family economics, institutional and home management, housing, and child care. Along with the educational subject matter, home management or practice houses became prevalent (Hall, p. 91). Home economics was thus gaining greater recognition from scientific and educational groups (Baldwin, p. 73).

Emphasis that had been placed on the natural sciences was beginning, during this era, to be directed toward economics and the social sciences. Though there began to be some recognition of the contribution of the social sciences in dealing with problems of the home, most institutions of higher education still continued to emphasize the natural sciences in their curricula.

The efforts of the Lake Placid Conference participants to win acceptance of home economics in higher education were met by the passage of the Smith-Lever Act (1914) and the Smith-Hughes Act (1917). The Smith-Lever Act established the Cooperative Extension Bureau "to aid in diffusing among the people of the United States useful and practical information on subjects relating to home economics and agriculture and to encourage the application of the same" (McGrath and Johnson, p. 12). Also important to home economics was the Smith-Hughes Act. This act shaped home economics in education at both the precollegiate and the collegiate levels, providing federal funds to pay teachers in home economics and subsidize their preparation in college, and was influential in bringing about the concept of homemaking as a vocation. This act thus tied home economics in institutions of higher education to teacher preparation and training as well as to supervisory programs and provided a major source of financial support for home economics in education.

In reviewing the development of home economics in land-grant institutions between the years 1910 and 1920, Calvin described the impact of the Smith-Hughes Act in the following way:

> *Up to the beginning of this period home economics ... [in] education provided in the land grant [institutions] ... was theoretically directed toward the preparation of women for their home activities. The training designed to prepare ... [individuals] for teaching home economics was but incidental to the major objective, training for home administration. ...*

> *The Smith-Hughes Act directly affected home economics teacher training in the land grant [institutions] . . . . Whereas previously teacher training had been incidental to other objectives of home economics instruction, it now became the major objective in many land-grant institutions under the stimulus of federal aid* (Calvin, pp. 1, 3).

The beginning of World War I created tremendous demand for women trained in dietetics, institutional management, and home-economics journalism, thus supporting the increasing emphasis on the professional aspect of home economics. In 1918, due to the war conditions, all attention focused on conservation and other energy measures, such as the cost of living, home projects on conservation of food and clothing, thrift and savings, social sanitation, the relation of food to health, and information about food values (Baldwin, p. 73). Interest in textiles, the need for standards to protect the consumer, standardization of women's clothing, and the conservation of clothing was also stimulated by the war. Federal support for home economics in education had been encouraged during the war as a result of widespread public recognition for its service in carrying out food conservation instruction in the Food Administration.

The Decade 1920-1929

At the end of the war, job opportunities for graduates of home economics programs increased rapidly, as Bevier noted: "The world having learned the value of home economics in the time of war was unwilling to abandon it in time of peace. Many new lines of effort were opened to women . . . trained in the problems of the home" (Bevier, 1925, p. 11). Many new avenues of service opened up for home economists aside from dietetics, teaching, and extension. Opportunities mushroomed into public health, social service, community services, child care, industrial feeding and school lunches, and other areas. Growing interest within home economics in the areas of consumer protection, home management, family welfare, family economics, child development and parent education, and interpersonal relations within the family as well as the acceptance of the need to educate women for the broader responsibility of the home and society led to increased emphasis on the importance of the social sciences as essential contributions to home economics. In addition to the emphasis placed on family living, attention was given to the development of home-demonstration programs and nursery schools, the teaching of nutrition, the effects of cooking on nutrition, and other nutritional considerations.

Bacon's idea that a relationship existed between knowledge and practical activities was stressed during this era by Alfred North Whitehead. Whitehead

believed that during the "Cultivation of Mental Power" stage of a person's education, theoretical interest and practical utility coincide:

> *Whatever be the detail with which . . . [one] crams . . . [the] student, the chance of his meeting in after-life exactly that detail is almost infinitesimal; and if he does meet it, he will probably have forgotten what . . . [he or she learned] about it. The really useful training yields comprehension of a few general principles with a thorough grounding in the way they apply to a variety of concrete details. In subsequent practice [individuals] . . . will have forgotten . . . [the] particular details, but they will remember by an unconscious common sense how to apply principles to immediate circumstances.*
>
> *. . . theoretical ideas should always find important applications within the . . . curriculum. This is not an easy doctrine to apply, but a very hard one. It contains within itself the problem of keeping knowledge alive, of preventing it from become inert, which is the central problem of all education* (Whitehead, pp. 17, 37).

Whitehead also expressed concern about the function of the institutions of higher education in their service to the people of a nation. His justification for an institution of higher education was that it preserve the connection between knowledge and the zest for life, by uniting the young and the old in the imaginative considerations of learning.

> *Imagination is not to be divorced from the facts: it is a way of illuminating the facts. It works by eliciting the general principles which apply to the facts, as they exist, and then by an intellectual survey of alternative possibilities which are consistent with those principles. It enables . . . [individuals] to construct an intellectual vision of a new world, and it preserves the zest of life by the suggestion of satisfying purposes* (Whitehead, pp. 93-94).
>
> *Education is a discipline for the adventure of life; research is intellectual adventure; and . . . [institutions of higher education] should be homes of adventure shared in common by young and old. For successful education there must always be a certain freshness in the knowledge . . . either . . . new in itself or . . . invested with some novelty of application to the new world of new times. Knowledge does not keep any better than fish . . . somehow it must come to the students, as it were, just drawn out of the sea and with the freshness of its immediate importance* (Whitehead, p. 98).

With the passing of the demand for centering efforts on physical needs, emphasis swung to educational needs: the consideration of higher education courses to gain a breadth of view in general education rather than overemphasis on technical skills. Thus recommendations were made to give less attention to the teaching of skills and techniques at the higher-education level and more emphasis on sound scholarship, on teaching the richness and fullness of life, on principles based on scientific research, and on world understandi[illegible] (Bane, pp. 700-701).

> *Home economics was far more than cooking, cleaning, and sewing. Careful analysis indicates that home economics in its most dynamic sense involves the economic problems of home management, problems of maintaining and creating good health conditions – mental and physical – within the home, and problems of dealing with social and civic obligations of the family* (Dyer, p. 484).

But the growth of fundamental knowledge in home economics and the broadening of the field to include social-science-based areas led to the addition of more program areas in home economics. To meet the demands of a technological society for highly specialized personnel and the new avenues of service opened to home economists, many institutions of higher education divided and subdivided curricula into narrow specialties, each requiring special competencies. And whatever areas that were developed, they took into account life in its five fundamental aspects: physiological, psychological, economic, social, and political (Dyer, p. 485).

Not everyone was satisfied with the division and subdivision of curricula into narrow specialties, since many home economists favored broad, "well-rounded" undergraduate education in preparation for a lifetime of home and family living and responsible community service. As early as 1920, as a result of a study of home economics curricula in agricultural schools, universities, and endowed schools, appraisal of home economics in terms of the elements of liberal education included in the curriculum was advocated (Krueger, p. 250). Home economics educators were concerned with providing the value of home economics as an integral part of higher education for women.

In 1923, Vassar undertook a new adventure in curriculum design in home economics, focusing the attention of educated women upon the contributions of natural and social sciences toward human welfare and world harmony (MacLeod, p. 119). The term *euthenics* was chosen to express the aims of this new experiment in education. Euthenics, as defined by Ellen H. Richards, meant the betterment of living conditions, through conscious endeavor, for the purpose of securing efficient human beings (Lake Placid Conference on Home Economics 1904, p. 63).

> *Many combinations of the euthenics major were possible in all areas–the most popular being child welfare with courses in child hygiene, child psychology, chemistry of food and nutrition, and the family–and in most cases, the courses had a common focus and were preceded by instruction in the natural and social sciences, with special emphasis on general principles, of psysiology, psychology and economics* (MacLeod, p. 121).

Periodic statements made in the following years deplored the growing tendency toward overemphasized skills and techniques at the expense of more fundamental knowledge. The American Home Economics Association Committee on the Program for Teacher Training reported in 1924 that

> *. . . the teaching of home economics means educating girls and women to apply to home life . . . the fundamental principles of nutrition, clothing and household management as . . . shown by the physical and social sciences* (Winchell, p. 653).

This report went on to recommend that curricula include the fundamentals of liberal education, training in skills and technical knowledge of home economics and related subjects, professional training for teachers, and the chance to study the demands of the changing societal conditions on education and the methods of meeting such demands (Winchell, p. 653). Thus interest in household skills continued, but more and more emphasis was placed on the study of social and economic problems as part of the home economics program. "While there is no need for home economics courses everywhere to be identical, there is the need for greater uniformity than exists at the present" (Krueger, p. 249).

The Decade 1930-1939

The skills of home economists were further called on in the 1930's by society's need for better management of family resources to offset the hardships of the Great Depression. To meet expanded demands between the two wars, home economics units in institutions of higher education had introduced additional curricula which gave increased attention to economic management.

> *The depression years pointed . . . [out] how little was known about the home . . . [stimulating] research in a number of new areas, such as time and money management, housing and household equipment, . . . nutritional conditions in rural areas, . . . consumer purchase studies, and studies of women's and children's measurements as a basis for garment and pattern sizing* (Adams, p. 14).

In a 1930 report of the discussion sponsored by the Department on Colleges and Universities of the American Home Economics Association, it was suggested that there was a need to decrease the requirements in education, science, and home economics in order to increase courses in the social sciences, such as sociology, economics, and philosophy (West, p. 825).

> *The field of home economics touches all sciences, literature and art, using them as a basis upon which to build the knowledge . . . which marks the development of the . . . individual . . . . Leaders with vision . . . should be able to see their field . . . in . . . relation to the other arts and sciences, developing a curriculum that allows for free expression of creative energy in all living problems rather than emphasizing factual materials to be kept in the mind on file until exams are passed . . . (Marlatt, p. 522).*

This statement, further emphasizing Whitehead's thoughts on theoretical interest and practical utility, stressed the development of home economics from the old emphasis on techniques and skills to the emphasis on the need of a foundation based on the natural and social sciences for application to the subject matter areas of home economics, as provided in Table 2.

Table 2. The Foundations and Characteristics of Home Economics

Foundations	Characteristics
TRADITION	Mother Lore
EXPERIENCE	Formal Instruction in Skills
SCIENCES-ART	Knowledge Related Science and Art Research
ECONOMICS-SOCIOLOGY	Wise Choices Economics of Construction Selective Judgment
PHILOSOPHY-PSYCHOLOGY	Enrichment of Life Family Relations Enduring Values

Source: The Foundations and Characters of Home Economics – Reproduced from Raitt (1935a, p. 269).

> *One contribution . . . [of home economics] to be made in the future of . . . [higher] education is to aid those teaching science, art, sociology, economics, and education so to humanize and vitalize the courses as they apply to the needs of home living* (Carmichael, p. 852).

Thus, the emphasis, in the 1930's, shifted from the mechanics of the household to the functions of the family, from skills as ends to skills as means to ends, from home economics as a subject to life situations, and from fixed practices to flexible procedures (Samuelson, p. 519).

Also during the 1930's, beginning courses started to deal with the problems of the student–maintaining health, budgeting, understanding of self, and adjusting to new relationships with the family and the higher education community. These persistent problems which were thought to be inescapable in the life of every individual constituted the "common core" (Coon, p. 158).

> *[The] unifying course–the core–offered . . . [students of home economics] the opportunity to consider broad relationships between the home and the community . . . [with] representatives from the various departments of the institution contributing to . . . [it and] helping the home economics staff and students to see how all phases of home economics function in meeting situations in personal, family, social, and community life of everyday* (Fallgater, p. 464).

Fundamental revisions in curricula were thus underway. Some curricula took the form of integrated programs while others were designated by such terms as core curricula, dynamic or life-centered curricula, and unified or coordinated programs (Zuill, 1938, p. 527). Along with the unifying course or the core, greater emphasis was beginning to be placed on elective courses available to students not majoring in home economics, such as marriage preparation, family finance, child care, housing, interior decoration, and nutrition (Godfrey, p. 455).

But a dilemma was also developing in home economics. This was stressed by Effie I. Raitt, President of the American Home Economics Association, when she noted a lack of agreement with regard to the distribution of credits and minimum requirements in the various curricula. Some individuals argued for more emphasis on the traditional, basic courses and others for larger social science requirements.

> *Always there is regret because literature, history and other subjects that contribute to general education do not have more place. At the same time home economics subject matter is enriched and broadened year by year. . . . If home economics is to take its place as*

a . . . [field of academic study], we shall probably have to go . . . to a program beyond the four-year curriculum . . . (Raitt, 1935b, pp. 483-484).

If the mission of home economics was to "survey all fields of knowledge, all lines of activities and to glean therefrom whatever may serve the end we seek, the improvement of the home and home life" (Raitt 1935a, p. 268), it was becoming increasingly difficult to offer one unified course of study which covered all aspects of daily living sufficiently to fulfill this mission.

The Decade 1940-1949

By the beginning of the 1940's, with the United States concerned once more with national defense, the expansion of the field of home economics was evident in a call for "quality leaders for projects in nutrition, food service, child care, budgeting, and other phases of homemaking" and a warning that "the home economics organizations—national, state and local—had a responsibility to try to prevent such from falling into well-meaning but incompetent hands" ("The AHEA and Defense," pp. 591-592). World War II brought with it the necessity for home economists to stay fit physically, mentally, and emotionally in order to make home economics a dynamic force reaching every corner of community life.

If home economics can rise to this challenge as it did to the 1917 call that "Food will win the war," the new place it wins for itself will be as great as what it won then through its food conservation work ("The AHEA and Defense," pp. 591-592).

With the end of the war, the emphasis upon knowledge and attitudes basic to satisfying family life was brought to the fore.

Again the concern about the requirements necessary for undergraduate degrees arose. Clara Brown, in 1943, reported a study of home economics curricula. She suggested that one of the major curricular problems in institutions of higher education was the determination of "how to provide professional education wtihout too much encroachment on the traditional liberal arts requirements" (Brown, 1943, p. 102). With any accreditation association to give direction or set standards for curriculum development, requirements for undergraduate degrees varied greatly among different institutions.

Home economics when viewed from the standpoint of other areas of subject matter which it embraces is an octopus indeed, with its

tentacles hungrily reaching out in all directions. And, as the . . . active tentacles of the octopus divert food substances into the parent organism, so do the various areas of home economics pour information into its key structure, THE HOME (Swanson, p. 65).

The Decade 1950-1959

During the 1950's, tremendous interest in home economics research increased in several types of institutions of higher education. Research in textiles and clothing as well as foods and nutrition had grown to meet the emergencies of the two world wars. Research in home economics education expanded as well as in areas of personality growth and in roles of home and family life in healthy child growth (Hoeflin, p. 204) and in areas of consumer education and family economics. Due to such specialized focus, some home economists again became concerned about the "fragmentation of knowledge" in home economics subject matter. It began to seem doubtful that anyone could become a generalist in home economics as the "integrator of the sciences and arts in service to all aspects of a democratic family life" (Henderson, p. 1), and encompass the multitude of areas which supplied the knowledge about the home and family life on which home economics depends, as illustrated in Figure 2. As the role of sociology and psychology in relation to the home economics program became more fully appreciated, the curriculum became more family-oriented.

No other area of learning, whether it be the social, physical or biological sciences, art or philosophy, has the unique heritage of responsibility . . . of Home Economics. It . . . [has] the responsibility of integrating the contributions from all the sciences, art and philosophy into one functional whole for service to families. . . . [This] integrating function for improving family life is . . . the unique purpose of home economics (Henderson, p. 10).

Research in the physical and biological sciences created an explosion of knowledge which resulted in the proliferation of subject matter in home economics (Lee and Dressel, p. 15). Despite the evidences of concern from within the field and increased criticism from without, proliferation in subject matter and curricula continued. The division and subdivision of home economics thus continued to the point that

. . . there are signs that fragmentation of home economics subject matter into discrete topics may have progressed as far as is practicable. The family cannot be broken up into eleven distinct components. . . . Never does . . . the family as a unit consider one of

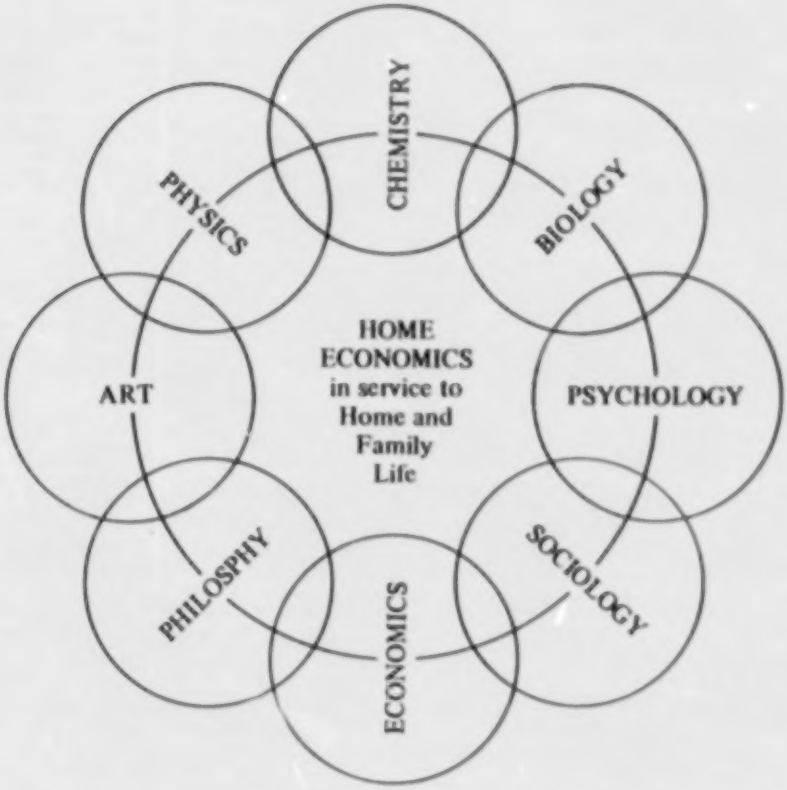

Figure 2. The Integrating Function of Home Economics as an Essential Characteristic – Reproduced from Henderson (p. 8).

> *them independent of all the others. We must now find ways to break through the artificial subject matter barriers we have so carefully erected through interdisciplinary research, integration of subject matter, experimentation, and creative thinking. . . . If we are to meet our commitment to the American family, we must focus our attention on a study of problems of the family, irrespective of the subject matter lines thus affected* (LeBaron, pp. 468-469).

Although the many services which home economics provided were winning a place in American life, home economics as a subject in higher education still remained insecure and threatened by other well-established disciplines. From its beginning home economics in higher education has been an applied field,

drawing from the basic disciplines of concern to the home and family. Home economics eventually became involved in the debates over the proper emphasis on science and inquiry in institutions of higher education, since educators had done little research in the subject that was embraced by home economics.

> *Whereas home economics research . . . had become established at the federal level in the first quarter of the century, it had scarcely made a beginning in . . . [institutions of higher education] . . . . This is understandable since the subject matter in home economics was being evolved and home economists were still . . . determining what of current knowledge they could teach effectively* (Adams, pp. 14-15).

Yet basic research was deemed essential to the advancement of an academic discipline, and home economists could not supply this basic research without the aid of specialists in other fields of knowledge. Thus by the 1960's home economics was fractured with disputes about its function and its future.

Beset by criticism from within the field, as well as from without, home economists had been reassessing their function and responsibility in light of sociological, psychological, and economic changes in contemporary society and their impact on families and their problems. Although efforts have been somewhat scattered, there is evidence of a willingness to engage in self-study and to attack some of the fundamental issues (Lee and Dressel, p. 32).

In 1956, an American Home Economics Association committee was appointed to review the past, survey the present, and make suggestions for the future. The important findings that emerged from the committee's report of 1959, *Home Economics New Directions: A Statement of Philosophy and Objectives*, reinforced the emphasis that home economics is primarily concerned with strengthening family life and is a field that focuses on knowledge from its own research and from the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities on the center of its main concern: the family and its aesthetic, behavioral, and physical milieu. Also, in 1959, a Home Economics Development Committee on the Division of Home Economics of The Association of Land Grant Colleges and Universities prepared a statement of objectives and future directions entitled *Home Economics in Land Grant Colleges and Universities*. This publication stated that

> *Home economics has the responsibility of making a direct and major contribution to the general education of men and women . . . [in] assuming leadership in developing cooperatively, with other areas, the family life program as part of the general education of students . . . [as well as] the responsibility of preparing under-*

> *graduates . . . for professions in education, business and industry, in dietetics and institutional management, in social welfare and public health, in research—all directed toward the betterment of family life* (Home Economics Development Committee of the Division of Home Economics of The Association of Land Grant Colleges and Universities, p. 6).

Despite the statements of philosophy and objectives and efforts of self-examination, there remained some difficulty in reconciling the apparent disparity between philosophy statements and actual courses and programs. Home economics in higher education should be general education or professional education, or both.

Around the time of the first half century of the American Home Economics Association, the impact of the launching of the first space satellite, Sputnik, by Russia, was being felt. Paolucci reflected the impact in which the central focus of home economics was recognized.

> *The family as the center of our universe . . . is the pivotal point without which we have neither purpose nor destiny.*
>
> *Our satellite must be so that it continues to provide the foundation for programs of educational and social action. . . . To keep in tune, the home economics satellite must be in an orbit that remains near enough to families that it can realistically analyze their needs—both immediate and potential—and . . . synthesize information, knowledge and skills which will effect a positive stimulus for helping families to realize their potential* (Paolucci, p. 499).

This statement also stressed the need for home economics to recognize and anticipate the impact of outside influences on the shaping of the central focus of home economics.

The Decade 1960-1969

In response to widespread concern over the problems of sequential organization of home economics content and other problems, such as image, name, and difficulty in interpreting broad philosophical statements into appropriate curricular patterns and course revisions, a seminar known as the French Lick Seminar was held in the summer of 1961. For the first time in the history of home economics, educators at all levels and specialists from all subject matter areas came together to explore the "concept approach" as a means of identifying, organizing, structuring, and unifying subject matter content of home

economics (*Home Economics Seminar*, p. 2). Among the challenges that emerged from this seminar were the need to (1) develop curricula which have a reasonable balance and interrelationship between general-liberal education and professional-technical specialization, (2) liberalize the content of home economics itself, and (3) assume greater responsibility for making contributions to the general education of all students.

By the early 1960's many institutions of higher education were taking a critical look at their curricula and making a concerted effort to increase the amount of general education requirements. The nature of the professional courses in home economics was also examined with the aim of reducing to a minimum or completely eliminating skill training (Sweetman, p. 9).

In 1963, in a report of a nationwide survey of curriculum changes in home economics in higher education, Marilyn Horn attempted to identify "trends" in curriculum changes. In summarizing the study, Horn indicated that the most sweeping changes had been in the larger schools and that only minor changes had occurred in the majority of the institutions since 1958. The most extensive area of changes reported was with regard to course content or emphasis. Among the changes mentioned most frequently were greater emphasis on consumer activities, professionalism, specialization, depth, management, sociopsychological aspects of clothing, world problems, dietetics, and family centeredness. Less emphasis was being placed on laboratory and manipulative skills. Few of the reporting institutions indicated any changes in overall objectives for home economics programs. The predominate pattern was a transition from homemaking to professional objectives (Horn, p. 239).

From the results, Horn indicated that due to the controversy of depth versus breadth, many institutions appeared to be waiting for some direction from the American Home Economics Association, but there did not seem to be enough direction for curricular revision. Horn also stated that, although different institutions had different objectives and different numbers of faculty and staff, there should be some uniformity of curriculum in home economics; if not actual accreditation, there should be a clear mandate from the American Home Economics Association as to minimum requirements in home economics as an academic field (Horn, p. 240).

Home economics in higher education as a content area can be viewed in three essential ways: a single field, a unified field, and a collection of disciplines or specialties banded together as an administrative unit on the grounds of historical ties and expediency (Lee and Dressel, pp. 89-94). In the beginning, home economics was a single field and all students took the same courses. As home economics grew and knowledge developed, its programs at numerous institutions of higher education moved toward a unified field concept with some areas of

home economics base to other areas. Emerging as home economics grew was a collection of majors and specialties. "Home economics in the present era may be regarded as made up of . . . relatively distinctive disciplines or groups of majors . . ." (Lee and Dressel, p. 91).

Educators within home economics and outside observers have examined the goals, content, and organization of home economics in an effort to determine whether programs in home economics need redefinition if they are to prepare home economists for work which is more satisfying as well as more useful (McGrath and Johnson, p. 4). Some observers have gone as far as to propose that, as a higher education subject, home economics has had its moment in history and should be abandoned, with its content separated and dispersed into a number of component specialties. East, a member of the accreditation committee of the American Home Economics Association, stated the rationale for this position:

> *The question remains . . . What is home economics? Within the field there is disagreement . . . Is home economics a single field? A collection of subject matter areas related primarily by the loosening ties of historical association? Is there anything gained by holding onto and strengthening the commonalities? Is more to be gained by cutting the ties and setting off separately for our destinies . . .* (East, p. 340).

McGrath, in his article "The Changing Mission of Home Economics," further formulated a few basic concepts of home economics as a whole:

> *Home economics is not a profession with a single distinct body of knowledge, skills, and ethics. Like the whole of the educational enterprise, home economics is an area of human interest and concern that encompasses and impinges on a number of occupations and other life activities. Its central mission has been and must continue to be that of family service . . . From the beginning the preoccupation of home economics has been centered in the family as a milieu in which individuals grow and achieve their basic learning in preparation for a productive, rewarding, and satisfying life.*
>
> *Around this commitment to the family unit there have been a number of more specific purposes related to such matters as nutrition, dietetics, and institutional management . . . yet, family service remains the integrative center of home economics . . .* (McGrath, pp. 67-68).

McGrath clearly stated that instead of the American society outgrowing home economics, contemporary society requires more of the field. This thought was further expressed by McGrath and Johnson:

> *. . . it is wiser policy to help and encourage home economics to adapt to new social needs than to abandon or dismember it as a field of study or to diffi its services to other elements of the American system of higher education* (McGrath and Johnson, p. 63).

Thus, while indicating that the mission of home economics has not changed in actuality, many very immediate and continuing changes are indicated because of the "... social, economic, and educational development in America ..." (McGrath and Johnson, p. 63).

A survey conducted by the United States Office of Education in 1961 revealed a wide variety of administrative patterns for home economics from separate and autonomous units to programs housed under another unit, such as liberal arts, agriculture, fine or applied arts, arts and sciences, or social studies. From these data, McGrath and Johnson suggested three different organizational patterns, each of which would have a somewhat different effect on inter-disciplinary relationships in teaching and research.

The first option involved a combination of a school, department, or college of home economics as a separate or autonomous unit within an institution of higher education. This administrative structure was considered to be effective in informally encouraging and implementing interdisciplinary efforts in research and teaching. The second option was the creation of a college of applied arts and sciences which would formally bring together a number of fields and professions. This type of college would be able to stress the applied nature of home economics and its relationship to other fields. The third option involved the creation of a new integrative college of human resources or human development in home economics in combination with the behavioral sciences. Stemming from the growing interest in the integrative nature of the behavioral sciences and their application to life, such new colleges would expand the orientation of home economics beyond agriculture to a concern for urban living and urban family life (McGrath and Johnson, pp. 66, 67).

Thus, McGrath and Johnson stressed that each institution needed to organize itself in its own way and in accordance with its own distinctive purposes. At some institutions, home economics would remain a field of interest as well as a distinct administrative structure while at others, home economics would be offered in new administrative structures that combine a variety of fields, with the term *home economics* replaced by other labels.

> *Home economics must be expanded beyond its primary orientation of food and nutrition . . . [clothing and shelter] . . . [to] home economics teaching and research . . . [being] increasingly integrated on either an informal or formal basis with related fields and basic disciplines that underlie them* (McGrath and Johnson, p. 68).

McGrath, also concerned to some extent with the structural reorganization of home economics, suggested the following arrangements into which home economics could develop:

> *. . . home economics . . . [could be] coordinated with the social sciences to assure continuous dialogue between the relevant professional groups . . . in cooperation with the basic disciplines . . . could become a unit in a College of Applied Arts and Sciences organically connected with other academic units in education, journalism, and business . . . [or could] maintain a separate and autonomous unit . . .* (McGrath, p. 92).

With respect to organizational and administrative structure, the programs of home economics should be given greater autonomy and freedom in establishing relationships with a wide range of disciplines in the liberal arts colleges and in professional and graduate schools.

Creekmore emphasized that natural relationships exist within the content of home economics which could be the basis of the organizational structure. Thus the content could be classified under larger areas of knowledge—the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the arts and humanities. With content categorized under larger areas of knowledge, it seemed logical that large administrative units or divisions should be divided into related discipline lines. According to Creekmore, this plan, to bring the professional option into a "tenuous" relationship with the structure rather than making the needs of the field the basis of learning, had the advantages of promoting a strong disciplinary approach within each division, a new and fresh look at old subject matter, and a means of facilitating the study of the interaction of the individual and the near environment (Creekmore, p. 98).

The Years 1970-1978

In addition to other demands concerning structural reorganization of home economics, the name of the field received its share of attention during the 1970's. Although many institutions of higher education have dropped the name *home economics*, no one has come up with the "best" solution. The name *home economics* was an adequate selection on the part of its founders, for it ably described the field at that time. When the two words were used together, they

referred to the management of the family, its members, relationships, and possessions. But as society became more complex

> *. . . the activities and interests of the field . . . [outstripped] the meaning of the two words themselves as a name. . . . Particularly salient for home economics is the matter of hidden nuances in the name. Although the name itself says nothing about the skills in cooking and sewing, this is the response most likely elicited by the listener. . . . The name home economics has many stray connotations* (Murphy, p. 705).

In the recent past, a number of faculty groups have boldly and inexplicitly dropped the name *home economics*. In some instances, it was because of the narrow connotations that did not accurately reflect the contemporary breadth and complexity of the work of home economists. Although each has had a unique reason for taking so consequential an action, inevitably the entire field, eager to sustain identity and unity, is affected.

In 1974, Weis, East, and Manning reported the findings of a study on structural and name changes in home economics in higher education.

> *Very few units have changed their name from home economics . . . primarily changes were seen in the smallest and the largest units. Many units have made structural changes, . . . most being positive responses to the enrollment increases* (Weis, *et al.*, p. 15).

The authors also found that the home economics situation on most campuses has drastically improved in image, status, administrative support, attitudes of students and faculty, number of faculty employed, enrollments of both major and nonmajor students, interest among the undergraduates, and variety of job opportunities for graduates (Weis, *et al.*, p. 15). The one important improvement cited by most units which have changed their name was that the enrollment of men majoring in the field had increased.

The Yankelovich report observed that the name changes ". . . appear more to confound than help" the situation and warned academic units of home economics of compounding confusion (Yankelovich, p. 12). It is true that confusion is always the concomitant of change and subsides only as new ways are learned. Confusion cannot exist in a static world. It is also true that fears are mainly unvoiced, although some persons have expressed growing realization that once an irretrievable point is reached, destinies are irreversible (Bonde, p. 32). Some home economists fear that the family may be lost while others fear that the field may not survive.

> *Recent attempts to change the name to broader designations appear to confound the purpose of home economics. There is reason for home economics to expand its horizon and encompass more of the current concern, but changing the name of the field when its meaning is already unclear only presents more confusion* (Yankelovich, p. 12).

Much thought has been given to finding a "better" name for all areas of home economics as well as activities that are a part of home economics. Some institutions of higher education have already substituted a new name for the academic unit administering the work of home economics. But we must ask if these changes involve mere words or basic concepts, whether *human development, human ecology, family life,* and other similar terminology are not *home economics* under another name.

In October, 1973, the American Home Economics Association sponsored the Eleventh Lake Placid Conference. The Conference concentrated on questions and statements concerning important issues in the field: the definition, focus, role, name, and values. These issues were as important in 1973 as they were in the original ten conferences. The Conference clearly identified that the field of home economics has many important tasks to which energies should be directed.

> *The actions . . . [that] are thought to be important: identify . . . [the] unique body of knowledge; . . . finish the French Lick start; show the philosophical coherence between home economics concepts; adapt an ecological systems conceptual frame; develop models showing interrelatedness and commonalities in home economics; set priorities for concepts to be taught; . . . [and] identify different levels of attainment* (Lake Placid Conference, 1973, p. 15).

A committee of the American Home Economics Association, in 1975, completed its work in the development of "Home Economics–New Directions II." Just as the original "New Directions," written in 1959, recognized the strengths of home economics, so, too, the "New Directions II" was hoped to provide leadership to the field at the time when interplays between family and society called for new insights and emphases. "New Directions II" was not intended to be a final statement about home economics, but rather a new benchmark in the development of the field:

> *[New Directions II] . . . evolved from many issues raised . . . at this point in time [1974-1975]. It represents the reflection of the continuing need for redirection of priorities of the . . . [field] to meet the changing needs of family and society* (American Home Economics Association, 1975, p. 12).

Looking at home economics from a different viewpoint, Harper summarized home economics data in terms of enrollment growth. It was noted that home economics in higher education grew vigorously during the decade 1962-63 through 1972-1973, especially at the undergraduate level with enrollments increasing 96 per cent. Comparing home economics undergraduate enrollment increases to the national trend in higher education for the same time period, Harper noted a greater proportionate rate of growth in home economics than was generally true in higher education. The undergraduate productivity was attributed to the elimination of small, relatively unproductive programs as well as to the larger numbers of students in higher education (Harper, p. 9).

Harper, using degrees granted as the measure of achievement, found the five most productive areas of specialization subsumed under home economics were (1) home economics education, (2) child development/family relations; (3) textiles, clothing, and fashion merchandising; (4) general home economics; and (5) food, nutrition, and dietetics. These five specialties accounted for 87 per cent of all degrees granted in home economics during 1972-73. The least productive specialty areas–each accounting for less than two per cent of all degrees granted in home economics–were (1) institutional, hotel, and motel management; (2) extension education; (3) housing and equipment; (4) home management/family economics; and (5) home economics in business (Harper, p. 10).

In 1979, the author reported the results of a study assessing the changes in name, administrative structure, and curriculum of home economics academic units in four-year colleges and universities since 1967. The findings indicated that most of the academic units offering home economics have retained the traditional name. A small percentage were being called by numerous other names, none general enough to be significant. The administrative structure of these units was, in general, departments reporting directly to the central administration of the institution. This was particularly true for the small liberal arts colleges.

The reasons expressed as being influential in the decisions to either retain or change the name and/or administrative structure were closely related to the academic environment of the units themselves. This emphasized the concern about "what individuals associated with the field are doing and how they are doing it as well as how the field and persons associated with it are perceived by the entire academic community" (Carver, p. 116).

The units that indicated a change in name and/or administrative structure also noted the effects of such changes on the unit as a whole. Satisfaction with the effects of change in administrative structure and name did not appear to be related to the basic institutional characteristics such as program size and

institutional type. Rather, the factors which appeared to be related to the effects of change were (1) an internal, improvement-oriented motivation and (2) a positive, committed attitude on the part of the faculty within the field and the administrators within the institution (Carver, p. 170).

Changes in curriculum of the home economics academic units over the last ten years were found to be of a wide variety. The most frequently identified change was the expansion or addition of majors or areas of specialization. Although the traditional areas subsumed under home economics still accounted for the largest proportion of the areas of specialization, the units appeared to be expanding into nontraditional areas, such as consumer studies, international studies, and health-related studies.

Home economics is not a field with a single distinct body of knowledge. The scope of home economics encompasses a broad range of subject matter and builds on the concepts of a number of basic disciplines. Thus, its content is closely related with that of the most basic areas of the natural sciences, social sciences, arts, and humanities. In view of the curricular program areas basic to home economics, the common core of the field, the various areas of general requirements from the basic disciplines, and the various areas of specialization within home economics were stressed as playing an important role in meeting the present and foreseeable needs of home economics. Education involving nontraditional groups, such as the handicapped, gifted, and retarded as well as the adults and senior citizens, were perceived as having an increasing impact on home economics programs up to the year 2000 (Carver, p. 171-172).

Carver also found that most of the home economics academic units were participating in some form of interdisciplinary program. The most commonly noted interdisciplinary efforts were those with related academic fields or disciplines such as nutrition with chemistry, biology, health, and education. It appeared that almost every area of specialization within home economics was cooperating with related areas both within and outside the field. Since it is no longer possible to cover all the areas of home economics and the basic disciplines, it would appear that a systematic, interdisciplinary curriculum would aid in integrating the home economics content rather than, as McGrath (p. 89) put it, "a congerie of snippets of specialization."

In addition to interdisciplinary programs, the home economics academic units indicated involvement in a variety of experimental and innovative programs. Over 50 per cent of the units were involved in such programs. Such approaches also appear to be increasing creativity and visibility of home economics in academia.

Observing the variations in name, administrative structure, and curriculum of home economics academic units in the United States, Carver found that most of the units both retained the name *home economics* and thought that the name should be consistent throughout the United States. It appears that recent attempts to change the name of the field to broader designations have confounded the purpose of the field and have confused both individuals within and outside the field as to its nature and mission. On the other hand, most of the units felt that the administrative structure and curriculum should provide variety and flexibility. Differing circumstances and resources surround administrative structure and curricular programs.

Possible future trends were sought by Carver based on consideration given to curriculum, name, and means of meeting foreseeable goals by combining current strengths with new efforts. Based on the data, most of the administrators viewed the demand for new and expanded programs as being either excellent or good. In addition to future considerations in curriculum, one of the concerns of home economists is to portray an accurate and positive image. The administrators were asked if a name change would aid in creating a more accurate and positive image of the field. Most of the units favored retaining the name *home economics* stressing that name change does not create or affect the image of the field. As long as individuals in the field are doing quality work which is effective in public contact and service, then name change seemed incidental (Carver, p. 175).

The unique interdisciplinary knowledge base of home economics was emphasized. It was felt that home economics could best confirm its heritage and meet the present and future challenges by expanding its interdisciplinary base in order to fully comprehend contemporary social problems and those of family life (Carver, p. 175). Another concern of home economists in the 1970's has been the changing situation of the family. With the increase of divorces, cohabitation, and single persons, why concern ourselves with families? Lund referred to the family as the "one stabilizing anchor in this very transient society . . . [giving] some sort of historical meaning to people's lives" (Lund, p. 10). Home economists will continue in the future, as they have in the past, to guide individuals and families in building creative lifestyles that make the home and family life a refuge and a source of strength of all persons. Some authorities have interpreted the changing structure and contemporary American family as a sign of the family's ultimate collapse as an effective social institution. In reality, these changes have been an adaptive response to changing human and social needs in a world very alien to our forefathers. Helping others in a future-shocked world to develop the capacity for close, personal, and intimate relationships will not be easy. But in doing so, both as home economists and human beings, we will be playing a vital role in bringing about improved quality of life for individuals and families.

The Challenge for Home Economists

> *The challenge of change is perhaps greater for no single body of knowledge than for home economics. This challenge is necessitated not only by rapid technological, social, and economic development . . . but also by the enormous growth of educational institutions which offer instruction in home economics . . .* (Blackwell, p. 447).

The history of home economics has been one of constantly developing aims. During the time when rapid technological and social changes affecting individuals and families were taking place, the Lake Placid Conference planners emerged from such separate fields as biochemistry, economics, nutrition, sanitation, and human development to begin a ten-year search for a common area of study that would respond to the problems facing all human beings. These scholars identified the family as the central focus for this new field, which came to be known as home economics. Up to that time home economics had been a "here and there" program without coordination or unity of any kind.

A lot has happened in the seventy-eight years since the Lake Placid Conference began. Since that time, home economics has:

1. Addressed problems of families and technologies of family households.

2. Developed programs to prepare the young for their family and household roles.

3. Completed research that has increased knowledge in the science of nutrition, developmental needs of children, economics of the household, decision-making processes, and selection of more comfortable, safer, and more attractive fabrics.

4. Helped women learn to efficiently manage their homes so they can prepare for another job or career.

5. Influenced legislation affecting the family.

6. Provided impact into the consumer movement.

Over the years home economists found greater satisfaction and reward in studying tangibles–the mechanics of living, the material goods and services associated with living–rather than from studying the intangible nature of the environment within which all human beings exist. Although facts about tangibles

are important, study of relationships is also important. Those committed to the concept of relationships between the individual and the near environment should progress by restructuring curricula, research efforts, and outreach programs to strengthen the concepts central to home economics.

Instead of moving forward with synthesis, home economics had moved toward specialization. Thus, in 1961, a seminar in French Lick, Indiana, was held to bring together both generalists and specialists to identify and unify the subject matter of home economics as well as to define basic home economics concepts.

As an extension of the French Lick Seminar, an eighteen-month project, known as Home Economics Defined, was initiated in late 1977 to examine the unique way home economics looks at individuals, their experiences, and their universe. Defining home economics is the basis for developing educational programs and interpreting the field to persons within and outside.

The challenge of home economists in higher education is, thus, in developing a more comprehensive philosophy and organizational structure on which to base their programs, differentiating home economics from other related areas of study, and identifying and defining its central concepts. Major emphasis of home economists should focus on adapting subject matter to current needs of students and contributing to other related academic fields or disciplines, the identification of a name associated with the underlying meaning of the field which portrays a positive image, and activities focusing on professional growth and development, intellectual stimulation, ideas, and continuing education.

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